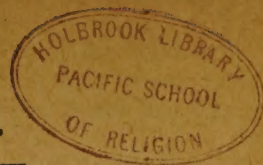


The Christian News-Letter

Edited by
J. H. OLDHAM



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DEAR MEMBER,

An increasing number of our members have relatives and friends who are prisoners of war. The short account in C.N.-L. Nos. 114 and 119 of what is being done to lighten the tedium of the lot of those in captivity by enabling them to continue their studies may be supplemented from a recent report of a visit in the early months of this year to prisoners' camps in Germany by Mr. André de Blonay on behalf of the European Student Relief Fund.

PRISONERS OF WAR

Among the camps visited was the large camp to which most of the British officers have been transferred. Education in this camp is more fully organized than in any other British camp, since the resources previously scattered in half a dozen camps are now pooled. The visit began in the educational library in which there are 3,000 volumes, most of which are in constant circulation among the 2,800 officers, nearly all of whom are engaged in one form of study or another.

"The camp school, or better 'university,' is divided into six sections, each headed by a qualified instructor. The most important is the section of engineering, which offers 15 courses, including higher mathematics, electro-technology, chemistry and physics. The programme of the arts section is eclectic, ranging from water colour painting and anatomy to history and philosophy. In the languages section, twenty different languages are taught including Arabic, Urdu, Malay, Tamil and Gaelic. The law section is very well attended, as are also those of agriculture and commerce. The total number of courses amount to 168 hours weekly.

"At two o'clock we meet again in the library. The captain holds the list on which I had noted the students I wanted to see. Most of them are there; I know their names, their studies, the university they have attended; I know their writing. I do not know their faces yet. With most of the students we have already corresponded for some time. But we have not always been able to satisfy their requests. English books are scarce on the continent and it takes a long time to order them from England.

"The general concern at present is preparation for the examinations, which, thanks to the efforts of the British Red Cross, the prisoners will be able to take in the camp next spring. This opportunity has tremendously stimulated the enthusiasm and zeal of the students. Some fifty English educational bodies have granted permission for their examinations to be taken in the camp, though the only external university degree which can be taken is that of London University. Close to university standard are the studies carried on in the law section, which has some fifty students, most of whom are reading either for the Bar or for the Solicitors' final examination.

"The students work with unbroken energy, since they know that only if their minds keep fit will they be able to overcome the trial of prolonged captivity. Study is for them not only a means of filling long hours of enforced leisure, but a bridge between the pre-war and post-war worlds. By his studies the prisoner is linked both to his past, of which they are a continuation, and to his future, for which they prepare him. Study is the very form of life behind the barbed wires—the life of the spirit which, independently of place and time, affirms its unity and continuation. But this life can only develop if it is nourished from the outside. It needs lasting interest and understanding of its problems; it needs to be linked with education at home, and the certainty that the efforts made will bring concrete results. Thanks to the educational books section of the British Red Cross and Student Relief, the prisoners know that the British universities are behind them and this knowledge makes every effort possible."

The work is not, of course, confined to British prisoners of war. Student Relief also provides books and material for study for French, Yugo-Slav and Polish students in Germany and Italy, and for German and Italian students in Canada, Australia and elsewhere.

Those fighting in France during the last war were often cheered by the small flowers which in spring forced their way through the scarred fields of Flanders. In the efforts of the Red Cross and Student Relief to mitigate the cruelties and demonries of war and to give expression to the indestructible impulse of men to minister to the needs of other men simply on the ground of their common humanity, we see the promise and anticipation of the restoration of a natural and humane order in place of the inferno in which we are now living. Those who wish to help in the good work may send their contributions to the British Red Cross, New Bodleian Library, Oxford, or to European Student Relief, Barnett House, Beaumont Street, Oxford.

THE SUPPLEMENT

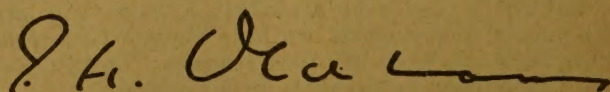
Miss Barbara Ward, who is still on the right side of 30, is on the staff of *The Economist*, the author of a recent book on Turkey, and one of the secretaries of the Sword of the Spirit movement. She belongs to the Roman Catholic Church and has been from the start a warm friend of the Christian News-Letter. She found time to put this paper into shape for our use on the eve of leaving for America by air. The term "Natural Law" has had a long history, and has been, and still is, the subject of much controversy. But the realities which Miss Ward intends by it are of fundamental importance for the rebuilding of Europe and deserve our most serious attention.

OUR RETURN TO LONDON

After nearly two years of evacuation to Oxford, during which we have experienced innumerable kindnesses from our many friends there, we are going back to London. We need to be in more frequent touch with the various movements, religious and social, which have their headquarters there, and a great deal of the advice on which we depend can be obtained more easily and quickly in London than elsewhere. All communications should be addressed in future to

19 DEAN'S YARD, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W. 1.

Yours sincerely,



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